

- 13 -

C L A I M S

1. A method of expanding a tubular element having a first portion to be expanded to a first inner diameter and a second portion to be expanded to a second inner diameter larger than the first inner diameter,

5 characterized in that the method comprises:

a) arranging an expandable sleeve of selected wall thickness in said second tubular element portion;

b) positioning an expander in the tubular element;

c) operating the expander so as to expand said first

10 tubular element portion to the first inner diameter, and operating the expander so as to expand the sleeve to an inner diameter substantially equal to the second inner diameter minus double the wall thickness of the sleeve; and

15 d) retrieving the sleeve from the tubular element.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the sleeve and the first tubular element portion are expanded to substantially the same inner diameter.

3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the tubular  
20 element extends into a wellbore formed in an earth formation, and wherein said second portion is an end portion of the tubular element.

4. The method of any one of claims 1-3, wherein the sleeve is provided with a plurality of openings defining  
25 a pattern of a plurality of members subjected to bending upon radial expansion of the sleeve.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein each said member includes a hinge section in which bending of the member is concentrated.

F:\OA\TS6437PCT

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

AMENDED SHEET

12/05/2005